(c) and (d) Safety Directorate of Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) is actively involved in monitoring, review and reporting aspects of various Railway Safety works being implemented. Railway safety is of prime concern to the Railways, hence is a continuous process. With the efforts being made, there has been continuous improvement in the safety performance of the Railways.

Compensation for land acquired for Bogibeel Project

3006. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that compensation for land which was acquired for the rail-cum-road approach to the Bogibee! bridge on the north bank from Sissiborgaon to Dembuk Kareng, is still pending;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the steps Government have taken for settlement of land compensation, which is pending in the Sissiborgaon Circle Office?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARANBHAI RATHWA): (a) to (c) The land required by Railways on the North Bank side of Bogibeel Bridge is being acquired by District Collector (DC) Dhemaji. The full funds as per the estimate/demand raised by DC/ Dhemaji have been deposited for disbursements to the land owners. DC/ Dhemaji has informed that full payments towards land acquired have been made in 170 cases and for some other cases 80% payment has been made and balance final payment is under process.

The matter is being pursued in the monthly meeting with DC/Dhemaji at field level and the quarterly meeting with Chief Secretary, Government of Assam at State level.

Pending Rail Projects

3007. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that pending railway projects are worth an astounding Rs. 47,000 crores (till March, 2005) and the longest pendancy is for a railway for which the budgetary allocation was first made in 1972;

(b) whether it is a fact that a detailed list of pending projects shows that for as many as 33 railway proejcts (some announced a decade ago), the Centre h**as** given 'nil' funds for commencing the railway line; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the action proposed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARANBHAI RATHWA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Review and rationalization of freight tariff by railways

3008. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have lately reduced the unloading time for Box-N-Wagon from 10 hours to 5 hours, while simultaneously increasing the demurrage/welfare charges, thus considerably increasing the demurrage burden on the power plants, the main users of coal;

(b) whether his Ministry has also raised the tariff on penal over-loading to six times and changed the classification of coal freight to the detriment of the consumer; and

(c) if so, whether the Government of Punjab and other States mainly dependent on thermal power have sought review and rationalization of these freight related issues and Government response and decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARANBHAI RATHWA): (a)to(c) In order to rationalize/streamline the system, free time for loading/unloading of wagons, rates of demurrage, wharfage & punitive charges and trainload classification of coal have been revised. However, keeping in view the representation from various Rail Users, following relaxations have been permitted:

Free time for mechanized unloading of open wagon rake has been increased to 7 hours *w.e.f.* 1.1.2006.

Rate of demurrage charge has been reduced *w.e.f.* 1.1.2006, as under: